

Message Text

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ACTION MMO-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PER-01 ABF-01
A-01 NSC-05 OMB-01 USIA-06 DODE-00 SNM-02 DEAE-00
CA-01 /048 W
-----043004 100456Z /15
R 100310Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4168

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AODE
SUBJ: EVALUATION BY CHIEF OF MISSION OF PERSONNEL LEVELS

REF: STATE 201122

1. THE PREPONDERANCE OF POST EFFORT IS DEVOTED TO THE FIRST PRIORITY PROGRAM OF NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION. IN ADDITION, MANY OTHER PROGRAMS ARE CONDUCTED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ENHANCE OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS, AT LEAST PERIPHERALLY. WITH SUCH A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF POST RESOURCES DEVOTED TO A SINGLE PROGRAM OF GREAT NATIONAL INTEREST, LITTLE ELSE IS LEFT TO PLAY WITH IN ATTEMPTING TO ELIMINATE OR DE-EMPHASIZE IN ORDER TO REDUCE BY FIVE OR FIFTEEN PERCENT. OBVIOUSLY, THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM ITSELF COULD BE DE-EMPHASIZED BY ANY PERCENTAGE MANDATED BY A REDUCTION IN RESOURCES. HOWEVER, THE IMPACT OF ANY SUCH REDUCTION WOULD SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE SOME ASPECT OF THAT PROGRAM. AND I ASSUME THAT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THERE IS NO REALISTIC POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DE-EMPHASIS.

2. THE POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SECTION PROPER CONSISTS OF THREE OFFICERS AND ONE SECRETARY. THE POST HAS BEEN CARRYING A VACANCY IN ONE OF THOSE SLOTS, THE NUMBER TWO POLITICAL OFFICER, FOR SOME MONTHS; WE COULD CONTINUE TO DO SO. HOWEVER, AS THE POLITICAL/ECONOMIC

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COUNSELOR, WHO IS ALSO DEPUTY NARCOTICS COORDINATOR AND DEA REPRESENTATIVE, MUST DEVOTE MORE THAN HALF OF HIS TIME TO NARCOTICS, OUR RESOURCES FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLITICAL REPORTING ARE BELOW MINIMAL STANDARDS AT THIS TIME. DOMESTIC POLITICAL EVENTS IN BURMA ARE NOT OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE USG BUT CERTAIN LEVELS OF OBSERVATION AND REPORTING MUST BE MAINTAINED IN ORDER TO PUT OUR NARCOTICS EFFORTS IN A CONTEXT AND PROVIDE THE

MINIMUM KNOWLEDGE OF POLITICAL EVENTS TO DETERMINE THE COUNTRY'S TRENDS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE ABSENCE OF A SECOND POLITICAL OFFICER IN RECENT MONTHS IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO DO SUCH BASIC REPORTS AS A STUDY OF THE JUSTICE DELIVERY SYSTEM, AND ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN ANY REASONABLE ASSESSMENT OF THE BURMESE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. BASIC STUDIES OF THE INSURGENCY SITUATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN NEGLECTED TO THE DETRIMENT OF OUR GENERAL KNOWLEDGE AS WELL AS OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF INSURGENT GROUPS IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. THE OTHER OFFICER IN THE SECTION DEVOTES FULL TIME TO ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL WORK, INCLUDING ASSISTANCE TO AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN IN OBTAINING SOME OF THE OFFICIAL GUB CONTRACTS WHICH ARE LET ON THE BASIS OF FOREIGN BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL LOANS. THE DE-EMPHASIS OF THIS FUNCTION BY FIFTEEN PERCENT WOULD NOT ALLOW US TO DISPOSE OF THE SINGLE OFFICER DOING THIS WORK.

3. THE DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE DOES NOT PLAN TO REPLACE THE ASSISTANT NAVAL ATTACHE WHEN HE DEPARTS IN NOVEMBER. THE POST CONCURS IN THIS MOVE AND THERE WILL BE VIRTUALLY NO SUBSTANTIVE LOSS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ONE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER COULD ALSO BE ELIMINATED FROM DAO WITHOUT SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZING THE OVERALL PROGRAM. HOWEVER, CURRENT ATTEMPTS TO EXPAND OUR DATA BASE ON THE BURMESE MILITARY IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF OUR ASSESSMENTS OF THAT ESTABLISHMENT VIS-A-VIS NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND PROTRACTED.

4. THE USIS PROGRAM IS MULTI-FACETED AND SOME OF ITS ELEMENTS DO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT RELATE DIRECTLY TO PRIORITY NATIONAL INTERESTS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LONG-TERM BOOK LOAN PROGRAM. NONETHELESS, THE PATIENT WORK OF USIS IN ALL OF ITS ASPECTS HAS HELPED CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT MORE FAVORABLE TO OUR MORE IMPORTANT INTERESTS. IT HAS ALSO HELPED TO EXPOSE ITS BURMESE AUDIENCES TO A LARGELY UNKNOWN OUTSIDE WORLD. BOTH WITH REGARD TO NARCOTICS AND WORLDWIDE INTEREST IN A NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, A DIMINUTION OF THIS PROGRAM WOULD BE INADVISABLE. IF RESOURCES REQUIRED A CUT, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CUT MORE THAN FIFTEEN PERCENT AND THE ONE POSITION WHICH COULD BE GIVEN UP WOULD BE THE AMERICAN USIS SECRETARY. THE LOSS OF EFFICIENCY TO THE OVERALL OPERATION WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE WELL IN EXCESS OF FIFTEEN PERCENT.

5. A RELATIVELY LARGE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, INCLUDING AN UNUSUALLY LARGE COMMUNICATIONS SECTION, STEMS FROM THE REQUIREMENT TO SUPPORT THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM AS WELL AS THE EXTREME DIFFICULTY OF PROVIDING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT IN THE BURMESE ENVIRONMENT. RECENT REORGANIZATIONS HAVE PERMITTED US TO GIVE UP THE DISBURSING OFFICER AND PERSONNEL OFFICER POSITIONS. WITH THE TRANSFER OF DISBURSING DUTIES TO FADPC BANGKOK AND THE ASSUMPTION OF PERSONNEL DUTIES BY OTHER OFFICERS, THE LOSS OF THESE POSITIONS SHOULD NOT AFFECT SUPPORT TO A MATERIAL DEGREE.

6. PROBABLY THE LEAST IMPORTANT PROGRAM IS THE COVERAGE OF UPPER BURMA SUPPLIED BY THE CONSUL IN MANDALAY. HE DOES PROVIDE A BROADER DIMENSION TO OUR EMBASSY PROGRAM, BUT WE COULD LIVE WITHOUT THAT. THIS CASE, HOWEVER, IS COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT OTHER ASPECTS OF THE MANDALAY CONSULATE ARE OF DEFINITE VALUE TO THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM. CONSEQUENTLY, ALTHOUGH WE COULD GIVE UP THE STATE PRINCIPAL OFFICER POSITION ON THE GROUNDS OF ITS LACK OF INTRINSIC WORTH, IT WOULD MAKE IT VERY DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN THE CONSULATE AND ITS UTILITY IN A PRIORITY PROGRAM.

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7. IN SUMMARY, THE POST HAS GIVEN UP, OR IS IN THE PROCESS OF GIVING UP THREE POSITIONS: PERSONNEL OFFICER, DISBURSING OFFICER AND ASSISTANT NAVAL ATTACHE. NONE OF THESE LOSSES WILL AFFECT HIGH PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS. TO GO BEYOND THAT AND GIVE UP THE MANDALAY PRINCIPAL OFFICER, THE USIS SECRETARY AND A DAO ENLISTED POSITION WOULD, WHILE TOLERABLE, REDUCE OUR EFFICIENCY IN THE NARCOTICS AREA AND IN AREAS WHICH ENHANCE OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS WORK. A FURTHER STEP, TO GIVE UP THE POLITICAL OFFICER POSITION NOW VACANT, WOULD HAVE A MORE SERIOUS IMPACT AND WOULD MAKE POLITICAL REPORTING AT EVEN MINIMAL LEVELS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE. THIS, TOO, WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM IN THAT THE BASIC POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT COULD NOT BE ADEQUATELY COVERED. ONE LAST POSSIBILITY PRESENTS ITSELF, THE ABOLITION OF ONE COMMUNICATIONS POSITION. BECAUSE THAT POSITION IS SOLELY DEVOTED TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION, GIVING UP THE SLOT DEPENDS ON CURRENT EXPERIMENTS IN THE USE OF SOME NEW MACHINERY TO TAKE THE PLACE OF A PERSON. BARTLEY

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